



## Whitestown RDC Meeting Minutes March 3, 2014

### Open the meeting:

**Robby Halford** called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm. **Roll Call:** Jim Gamble, Robby Halford, Sarah Ford, Andrew McGee, Eric Miller present. **Dax Norton**, Whitestown Town Manager, **Jon Hughes**, Town Attorney and **Bryan Brackemyre**, Boone EDC Executive Director, were also present at the meeting.

### Meeting Minutes:

**Robby Halford** asked for a motion to approve meeting minutes for the February 3, 2014, and February 24, 2014, meeting minutes. **Eric Miller** made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the 2/3/2014 and 2/24/2014 meeting minutes, **Jim Gamble 2<sup>nd</sup>**. Motion carries 5-0

### Public Request to Speak:

None

### Unfinished Business:

#### **Item A – Discuss RDC Recommendation to the Town Council to Reduce the Whitestown Tax Abatement Application Fee.**

**Dax Norton** handed the commissioners a packet listing 9 companies that paid fees since 2008. Discussion ensued. **Eric Miller** made a motion that the RDC recommend that the Town Council amend the Ordinance setting the tax abatement impact fees to adjust the initial tax abatement fee from the current \$1,000 to \$2,000 due within 30 days of receipt of the tax abatement and eliminate the incremental tax abatement application fee for both real and personal property, motion was seconded by Andrew McGee. Robby Halford asked for further discussion. **Robby Halford** asked why the jump from \$1,000 to \$2,000 for the initial fee. **Eric Miller** stated that \$2,000 was more in line with the legal costs associated with tax abatement. **Robby Halford** asked if the applicant knew what the fee was to be used for. **Dax Norton** stated that there is no explanation given to the applicant. **Sarah Ford** asked if the Weaver fee would be refunded. **Dax Norton** suggested that the commissioners could add this to the current recommendation. **Eric Miller** stated that this was not in his motion on the table. **Robby Halford** and **Eric Miller** suggested that this be considered with a separate motion. **Robby Halford** asked for vote on the motion. Motion carried 5-0

**Robby Halford** asked **Bryan Brackemyre** to explain why GNC and Weaver should receive a refund on the abatement fee that they submitted. **Bryan Brackemyre** explained that GNC had a very bad taste in their mouth due to the extremely high fee. He also stated that Weaver received a very good incentive. He stated that the GNC real estate representative stated that they have never paid any higher than \$5,000 for this fee. **Andrew McGee** asked if GNC would be going anywhere if the fee was not refunded. **Bryan Brackemyre** stated that they would not but they may be less likely to participate in community activities. **Jim Gamble** asked if the RDC had the authority to wave the fee on a case by case basis. **Jon Hughes** stated that the RDC could possibly wave the fee. **Robby Halford** stated that refunded fees may open a can of worms. **Sarah Ford** stated that it was a slippery slope. **Dax Norton** stated that it would set a bad precedent. No action was taken on the matter.

#### **New Business:**

##### **Item A – Discuss Whitestown Downtown Revitalization Plan.**

**Dax Norton** presented a brief history of how and why the plan was created. He stated that the town had tried many times to start a Main Street group, but the effort failed each time. He stated that some council members suggested that the RDC spearhead the Main Street Effort and spearhead the implementation of the plan. **Dax Norton** stated it was important that the plan not sit on a shelf. **Robby Halford** asked for comments from the commission. **Sarah Ford** asked what group worked on the plan. **Dax Norton** stated that names were listed in the plan document. **Robby Halford** stated that he had reservations about the plan. He questioned if the amount of time, energy and money spent in historic town was worth it when most of the population and growth was occurring south near Whitestown Parkway. **Bryan Brackemyre** stated that the RDC should not underestimate the economic impact of the Farm Heritage Trail. **Dax Norton** stated that administration was not asking the RDC to redo the plan. He stated that the current plan needed a group to implement the plan. **Robby Halford** stated that he would need information before he was willing to recruit people to sit on a committee to implement the plan. He stated that the plan was very high level. **Sarah Ford** asked if money had been requested to implement the plan. **Dax Norton** stated that the Main and Pierce Street project was scheduled to receive federal funding but that fell through when the town was included in the Indianapolis MPO. He stated that federal funding will be very hard to come by moving forward. **Eric Miller** stated that it is important to establish a committee to implement the plan but agreed that many questions needed answered. **Robby Halford** suggested that staff needed to gather information and this item needed to be discussed at the RDC workshop or during the April meeting. Additional discussion ensued.

##### **Item B – Discuss Workshop**

**Robby Halford** asked about the length of the workshop. Discussion ensued. The workshop was set for Monday, March 24, 2014 at 6:30 pm. The RDC will discuss Economic Development Strategic plan, Budget and the Downtown Revitalization plan.

#### **Other Business:**

**Dax Norton** reminded the commission that they would be reviewing CF-1 forms soon. Discussion ensued.

Dax Norton suggested this commission build a relationship with the county and Zionsville RDC.

**Adjourn:**

Robby Halford asked for motion to adjourn. Andrew McGee moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:58 pm.

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Robby Halford, President

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Andrew McGee

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Jim Gamble

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Sarah Ford

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Eric Miller

ATTEST:

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Dax Norton